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6 Teens Charged Exploding Molotov Cocktails at Sri Lakshmi Temple

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan, Ashland Police Chief Scott C. Rohmer and Ashland Fire Chief William Kee announced that six Framingham teenagers will be charged for throwing Molotov cocktails in the parking lot of the Sri Lakshmi Temple. The incidents took place the nights of July 7-8, 2007 and August 4-5, 2007. Over \$12,000 worth of damage was done to two light poles in the parking lot of the temple located at 117 Waverly Street, Ashland.

Four teenagers will be arrested today and two more will be summonsed to court to face charges of possession of a Molotov cocktail, malicious destruction of property over \$250, causing an explosion and conspiracy. All six of the teenagers are 16-years old and residents of Framingham.

The Sri Lakshmi Temple is also known as the New England Hindu Temple because it is the only Hindu temple in the region. People come from as far away as New Jersey to worship here.

Chief Rohmer said, "Investigators do not believe these incidents were hate crimes, but until the perpetrators were caught, the motive could not be known. The members of the temple, and the community as a whole, experienced significant fear and anxiety not knowing whether or not this was a hate crime."

Coan said, "We always take a fire or explosion at a house of worship extremely seriously. I am proud of the efforts of the investigative team to bring these teens to justice and I want to send a message to teens across the Commonwealth that these actions will not be taken lightly. This is a serious crime and will be treated as such."

These incidents were jointly investigated by the Ashland Fire Department, the Ashland Police Department and State Police in the Fire and Explosion Investigation Section of the Office of the State Fire Marshal. The Hopkinton Fire Department assisted with the investigation.